

J. Rowe

Notes, etc

Underground

R.P.

Dr. Nicholas Van Alstine

He may be the man who was the brilliant mind behind the Underground that passed slaves from ships docked on the East shore of the Hudson River, to Massachusetts and Vermont free states.

His code name was, PAUL was noted in his obituary. For years I've looked for proof of some of the stories about the people who hid the slaves, then moved them from safe house, to safe house. All the time moving closer to the Massachusetts border,

The Lutheran Church in West Sand was split on the issue of freeing the slaves and the abolition movement. Finally the church membership split. The abolition movement from the 2nd Lutheran Church of West Sand Lake. Dr. Van Alstine was Pastor of this church from

The area of Sand Lake is only a few miles from the Mass. Border. The Glass Factory on Glass Lake used sand from Lanesborough, Mass. to make window glass. The sand was shipped in barrels from Lanesborough to Glass Lake. The empty barrels were sent back to Berkshire County.

According to descendants of the owners and workers in the Glass Factory they were not always empty. The route was over Turner Mountain to Lanesborough. An old clipping sent to me by the Lanesborough Historian was about a stop the underground railroad. It sat at the corner of the road the wagons passed on their way to the sand beds.

Albert R. Fox's home was said to be a stop on the underground route. His code name "John" .

Another code name " Luke" may have been used by one of the Gregory family.

Mrs. Mary *Mary* said the names of the 12 apostles were used as code names since they could be announced from the pulpit or bibles carried with passages marked. If they were found ~~if found~~

79 a home or carriage was searched they would ~~cannot~~ raise no one's suspicion's. New Testments were often carried in the pockets of mens shirts. The 12 th appostle was Judas they used this name for slave boundy hunters, Federal Marshals and local law officals.

Messages could be carried with out fear, a special chapter or verse could be read or dissguised in the open with out drawing attenion

Charles Nalle, a runaway slave was hired as a teamster driving the lumber wagons in Sand Lake. Some one turned him in . Court was held in Troy, N.Y. Over what was then abank on the corner of State Street and First Street. Nalle was grabed and let down into acrow below

~~Then~~ Then rowed across the Hudson River, taken to the Shakers in Colonie . He was Hidden untill a subscription was taken to buy his freedom and his families.

The number of slaves who found thier way to Rensselaer County increased by 60 % between 1835 and 1860.

Isacc Fox's Great, Great Grand son S. L. Fox told ua about a tunnel that exsisted in the Albert R. Fox home. Where slaves could be hidden,

~~Again~~ While we owned Gifford's Market two women from Colordo were sent to the store by some one at the Gregorokiy house. Since I had researched the history of the glass factory, she thought I might be intrested in the fact they played in the Fox house as children. They told me as children hid and seek was played in and near the old tunnel.

The Minick Tavern stood on route what is now #66 across from the lumber mill. The tavern was toren down when they widened route #66. Eleoner Gethner ,retold this story that was passed down in her family, Maney slaves were hidden in the tavern, when word came Federal Marshals were on thier way to search the house. Two very small children had not been hidden with the other slaves because they were so small.

Obituary Notice
Reverend Nicholas Van Alstine

Journal and Courier - 11/6/1900
Death of Rev. Dr. Nicholas Van Alstine

The death of this venerable clergyman occurred at 5 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the home of his son, S. M. Van Alstine, of John Street. Heart trouble of which he had suffered at intervals for five years or more, was the cause. He was very ill all day Saturday, much of the time unconscious, having suffered an unusually severe attack that morning.

Deceased was born in the town of Sharon, Schoharie county, March 21, 1814, thus being in his 87th year. Ordained a minister of the Lutheran church in 1836, he continued in active service for sixty - three years, retiring from his pulpit in Raymertown, Rensselaer county, a year ago last month.

About 1840 Dr. Van Alstine became pastor of the Lutheran church of Minden, Montgomery county, going thence, after ten years of service to Sand Lake, Rensselaer county, where he spent ten years. Again, called to the church in Minden he continued as pastor there for ten years, making twenty in all. From 1870 to 1899, a term of twenty - nine years, he was pastor of the church at Raymertown.

The degree of doctor of divinity was conferred upon him in 1887 by Wittenberg college. Always a liberal contributor in aiding good works, he gave generously to Hartwick Seminary in which his theological studies were conducted. Upon retiring from the ministry a year ago he gave his library of 400 volumes, together with a check for \$1,000 to this institution, of which he had served as trustee some thirty years or more.

Dr. Van Alstine was one to command respect, as clergyman and citizen. Possessed of a fine constitution, his presence showed vigor and energy, and his countenance and manner were always kindly. A marked characteristic was his will power and tenacity of conviction. He was always an earnest temperance advocate. During the Anti - Slavery agitation he was an Abolitionist counted among the staunch friends of the black man. His home at Sand Lake during the fifties was one of the stations of the so - called "underground railroad", along which fugitive slaves escaped to Canada.

He was the oldest member of the Franckean Synod of the Lutheran church, and was for many years president of the synod. His long active life, filled with hard, earnest work in the cause of humanity, forms an interesting biography. He was the last survivor of a family of eight. His wife passed away nineteen years ago, and a daughter two years ago, for death occurring also on November 3. Two sons, Charles O. and Sanders M. Van Alstine, survive. The funeral will be held Wednesday. There will be prayer by Rev. Dr. Richardson at the home on John street at 10:30 and funeral sermon in the church at Minden at 1 p.m. The service will be by Rev. G.E. Harsh, of St. Johnsville, president of the synod; other members of the synod will be present and assist in the services. Three clergymen of this city, Rev Dr. Richardson, Rev T.T. Rowe, and Rev C.E.S. Rassay will act as bearers, five being selected from the ministers present. Interment at Minden.